

The Presidents Cup

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Medinah, Illinois, United States

Medinah Country Club

Brandt Snedeker

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the 2026 Presidents Cup here at Medinah Country Club. We're pleased to be joined by United States team captain, Brandt Snedeker.

Brandt, you've had a couple of days now to be among the team. The week's finally here. If we could just get some opening comments from you on what these first 48 hours have been like with all 12 guys.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I think we're all really excited. It's great to get everybody here. Obviously the weather this weekend wasn't ideal, but getting these guys on the golf course the last two days and spend some time together has been really fun for me, really fun for our team, and get that bonding experience going.

It's been a great start. Obviously we have a long way to go. I think the guys are excited to be here, the most important part of it, and they've come together. They've done anything you could possibly ask of them. It's been a really fun experience.

Q. Several guys on the team have expressed open Christian beliefs and Christian faith. Is that something that has helped bond this team together? Is it something that you've noticed bringing this team closer?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I think this team is close regardless of bringing the faith into it. I think that helps guys connect. Obviously they spend time away from -- we all have different pursuits outside of golf, and it's definitely helped bond those guys for sure. They spend a lot of time together. They have Bible studies together on Tour.

Anything these guys do off the golf course to bring them together, I'm all for it. These guys are great human beings.

We were talking about last night actually in the team room. One of the things that my wife and I have been so impressed by our team is the quality of human beings that we have in that room. That was a big message I made

sure they understood last night.

We've been so impressed and blessed to have the 12 individuals in that room and what they represent and how they carry themselves.

Q. Wondering if it warmed your heart to see the results of the Biltmore and Jacob Bridgeman's win, and how important that is to have a guy coming in fresh off a win?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I think it's great for confidence. I think Jacob -- I've thought high of Jacob for a long time. To see him go out there and -- I had a similar experience. I can go back to when I was picked for a team the first time, and I was able to go out and win the FedExCup and help Davis, A, I was super proud to do that, but B, it was really great to have that confidence boost from a captain to pick me when he had every right not to.

When I saw Jacob play the way he did, I was super happy for him. It was a great moment for him to come into the team room Sunday night and celebrate with the guys and the way he battled. We're super fortunate we've got 12 great guys in the room, got a bunch of great players in American golf. To have a guy come off a win like that, it kind of got the week off to the right start.

Q. Why have the Americans done so well in this event and not so well recently in the Ryder Cup?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: That's a great question. I think every team is different. I think trying to figure out the secret sauce, if you will, of why the success has been this way is the hardest question we're trying to answer. Every team is different. The makeup of every team is different. The bonding in every team is different. So trying to navigate that is really, really difficult.

I think the one thing that we -- I'm super proud of and happy for is being part of the team in Montreal as Jim's vice captain and stepping into this role. The foundation was set for me. I had a great blueprint to follow. The Tour staff we worked with behind the scenes has been phenomenal. I've taken stuff off my plate and let me worry

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about the important things that I think are important that week.

I think having that consistency year to year has been really important, and it takes things off our plate. Our guys see the same people every year. They see the same guys every week on Tour. They're comfortable when they walk into a team room. They know what they're getting into. I think that's a question down the road of maybe trying to figure this thing out for both of them in that same guard.

Q. You mentioned playing for Davis here in 2012. Was there anything about that experience? I know the golf course is different, but is there anything about that experience that maybe shaped you as a player and now as a captain?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: As I've spoken at length about, I think you learn way more from your losses than your wins, and what happened Sunday at Medinah that year taught me a lot. A, it taught me how much these guys care, seeing my idols of the game and who I was a teammate with crying in the locker room on Sunday night when things didn't go our way.

I think you learn from those experiences. You try to build up a team around those experiences. I've built my career around that.

But as far as the golf course goes, it's totally different. It's not the same kind of golf course. So that's really not going to play a factor.

I am excited to be back in Chicago. I think this is a great sports town. I remember that vividly from the week of Medinah how great the fans were. Being back here is one thing I'm going to lean on. These fans here are fantastic. It's a great sports town, and they love golf. Hope they come out in droves this week.

Q. We saw this with Tiger in his peak years; when you dominate a sport for multiple years, there's almost an expectation when you come to these Cup matches of delivering four points or five points, and it doesn't always work that way. Scottie's not off to a glowing start in his Cup experience. Why do you think that is? Is there an extra burden or what?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I don't really know, to be honest with you. I think it's a great question. I think Scottie Scheffler being Scottie Scheffler is the most important thing for us as a team. We can't ask him to do more than he can do. He can only deliver five points at his best, if he goes out and plays unbelievable. We just want Scottie to go out there and be comfortable and go out there and have fun

and be the Scottie Scheffler he is every week.

I don't want him to take a burden on. He's not going to win or lose us this Presidents Cup. The Presidents Cup is won or lost by 12 people. Hopefully not the captain, hopefully the 12 guys.

I think we've been really intentional about trying to make these guys come together, and nobody is going to get what they want out of this without all 12 of us pitching in and doing our job. That goes for us as vice captains and captains, the back office guys. And with Scottie, we want Scottie to go out and be Scottie Scheffler. He doesn't have to be anybody other than that.

Q. What do you see as the strategic challenge of Medinah?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: It's obviously a big ballpark, right? We're talking a very long, difficult golf course. Obviously the hardest thing for us, I think for both teams, is getting used to it. This is a completely new ballpark for us. The green complexes are super difficult. You've got lots of slopes on them.

I think the team that gets the most comfortable the quickest is going to have an advantage. So trying to get these guys comfortable with the layout, trying to make sure we've got a good game plan for them. This is a championship-style golf course. It's meant to play tough. It's meant to play long. I can't wait for our guys to step up and rise to the challenge this golf course is going to create.

Q. If I could follow on the Scottie question, he had three different partners at the Ryder Cup last year. He did okay two years ago at the Presidents Cup with Russell, wasn't great at the previous Ryder Cup. Is there anything in the pairings that's held him back, do you think, or is that a challenge for you to figure out who to put him with?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, it's a challenge. I think you look at the best players throughout history that have played in these events, it's always been a challenge to kind of match them up. I think there's an inherent kind of -- not fear for the guy they're playing with, but a feeling of I'm letting him down. He's the best player in the world. He's so good at everything; no matter what I do isn't going to be good enough.

So trying to find someone who can handle that and be themselves and not try to be someone else is super important. These guys are elite athletes, the best players in the world because they're unique. Scottie Scheffler, Tiger Woods, Jack, the history of these guys, they're

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unique. So trying to find the best way of matching them personality-wise, matching them up with guys they feel comfortable with is our challenge as captains.

We're going to keep doing that. We're going to keep trying to find the best pairings for Scottie and the rest of the 11 players on our team. Getting back to Scottie, Scottie Scheffler is not going to be the reason we win or lose this Ryder Cup necessarily. It's going to have to be 12 people pitching in and doing their job.

Q. (No microphone.)

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, my vice captain, Jim Furyk, was my partner in my first Ryder Cup. I kept thinking no matter what I do, I'll never hit it as straight as he does; this is not going to go well. So every time I hit a tee ball, I was freaking out a little bit.

Jim was great. He kind of put me under his wing and told me, hey, just go be you. Don't try to play golf like I play golf. Go play your style of golf. That's the challenge of these team events. You don't get to spend a lot of time with these guys during the course of the year, so trying to get the teamwork as quick as possible is what we're charged with as captains.

Q. You have a bunch of Presidents Cup veterans on this team as well but also a healthy mix of new people like Bridgeman and Gotterup and Jackson Koivun. What are some things you're doing to help make sure they're prepared to manage the fan environment and the expectations as well?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, I think we have a great team room to help them along the way. I think having the veterans we have in our team room is great for the young guys that come in. I think their relationships with a lot of those guys in the team room has been super important. I think those guys feel really comfortable.

That was the thing I was worried about the most probably. I remember from my first few teams is walking in a team room the first time with Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson in there. It's a different vibe, right? So trying to get those guys as comfortable as possible.

Jackson Koivun was playing college golf a year ago. Now he's in a team room and a group chat with Scottie Scheffler, Sam Burns, Patrick Cantlay. Trying to get him as comfortable as possible. The guys have been fantastic.

At the end of the day, if the guys in the team room buy into bringing him in, it's going to make that transition a lot easier. I keep going back to these guys are super close.

They're great. I couldn't ask for 12 guys to get along the way they've been getting along this week. I've been super excited to get this thing underway.

Q. Following on from what you just said about Jackson, your decision to pick him over anyone else as a captain's pick this year, he's got the best match play record in Auburn golf history and played amazing in the Walker Cup last year. Did that go into your decision? Did that affect your decision to pick him? Second, what do you think makes a great match player?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I think when you're thinking about picking any player, not just Jackson, you're taking every piece of information in. I knew perfectly well what his match play record was. I knew perfectly well what his college record was. And that goes for everybody we're thinking about picking, not just Jackson. You have to take all that into account when you're trying to make these decisions.

When it comes to what makes a great match play player, at the end of the day, it's going to come down to determination, will, grit, those kinds of things.

The one thing we're lucky to have is our guys in our room are super competitive. They don't want to lose at anything, especially when you give them a head-to-head matchup. That's where they thrive. Excited to give them those opportunities to where the true competitor in them can come out, and they can go out there and play the kind of golf they know they're capable of.

Q. Do you already know who's playing for you on Thursday?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: We have an idea, yeah.

Q. Is there anything that could change that in the next day and a half?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, there's a lot of things that could change that. Guys can wake up with a bad back. Guys can get hurt. Guys can get sick. We have a plan that we think can work, but you're constantly modifying it, looking at it, trying to figure out the best possible -- the message to the guys is we're putting the best possible guys on the golf course, period, end of story.

This is not trying to make anybody happy or do whatever. We're putting the best players out there and let you all go do your thing. Then we're getting the heck out of your way. What am I going to tell Scottie Scheffler to do with a 7-iron in his hand? He needs to tell me what he does because



it's really impressive to watch.

Our job as captains is to do the best prep work possible to make the best, most informed decisions and give them a pat on the butt and say go get 'em and we'll see you back here when you get done.

Q. Do you know with the renovation, do you have a sense of whether the course will play more difficult than it did pre-renovation, or will the Tour be able to set it up so it's tougher?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I think it's going to be really hard to see how difficult this place is with the conditions we have. It would take a drastic dry-out to see this place get to the intention of the design. The intention of this design was to have a ball run in the fairways, into the greens, bouncing around and kind of letting these slopes do their thing.

With the amount of rain we've had the last ten days, it's going to be really difficult for this golf course to dry out. It's going to be a really hard barometer of a week of how difficult this golf course can play.

I'm sure the Tour staff will do everything they can to make sure this golf course dries out. They've done a phenomenal job in the 48 hours we've been here of trying to get this place to dry out, but there's only so much you can do.

I think the intention, as Geoff has spoken about openly, is the charge he had was to make it play easier for the members and harder for us. I think he's accomplished it with the corridors. The members enjoy it better. This probably is going to be the best week of seeing this place play firm and fast of how difficult this place can play.

That being said, it's the perfect venue to do this at because of match play. It's a Presidents Cup. There's no relation to par going up on a leaderboard. It's strictly who you're beating. This will be a great kind of opening session to see how this golf course is going to play going forward.

Q. Have you had any discussions internally about the internal out-of-bounds on the three holes in a row?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah.

Q. What's been the general sentiment if you could describe it?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: We deal with it every week on Tour. Every week on Tour, there's some kind of guys are used to it, and it's just about getting used to it. There's nothing these guys aren't used to.

Q. Now you've seen Jackson around the guys a little bit, what is his demeanor around them? Is he confident, a little more reserved? What's he been like?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I think he's more of a reserved guy. We have some big personalities in that room playing a role in that too. The guys have done a great job welcoming him in. He's learned our team pretty well. He's not afraid to give it back when people are giving it to him.

I think Jackson's process is probably on the reserved side. He's not going to be a gregarious outgoing guy and joking and laughing a ton. For someone who's 21 years old, he's well beyond those years in the way he carries himself. We're not asking him to be somebody he's not this week. We want him to just go be him.

Q. How long is the bus ride from the hotel? What do you do to pass the time? Who is the single biggest talker on your team?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Bus ride is anywhere between 45 minutes to an hour. Quick note, can't thank the state police enough for their police escort of getting us here to and from. Makes life a lot easier. Thanks to our fine sheriffs and deputies that are helping us get to and from every day.

But it's 45 minutes. We try to have fun on the bus. I let the caddies kind of lead the charge in the back of the bus. They're normally the best at keeping things going. I kind of stay out of the fray, let them have fun and relax, do whatever they need to do to get back.

It's not ideal by any stretch of the imagination, but you can have some fun in there and want these guys to bond and give each other grief. We've got a pretty good chat going. There's plenty of texts being fired off on the way back.

Q. Who's the biggest talker on the team?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Who's our biggest talker? I mean, Xander loves getting in there. He loves kind of keeping everybody in check, and I love that about him. He's not afraid to give it to me or Gary or Jim or Keegan or whatever, anybody. He always kind of seems to be in the middle of it.

Q. The spectrum of data is gospel to -- this is a team competition; totally different, you can throw the stats out the window. Where would you place yourself on that spectrum, and how has your thinking evolved over time?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I think the best way I can sum up



stats is stats are great in 10,000-round models. We're playing an 18-hole match. Use them to help you make informed decisions, but you can't just be stuck to them. You've got to see what your eyes see.

A lot of these matches will be over in 12, 13, 14 holes for the most part. Stats necessarily aren't going to bear that out over three days of golf, four days of golf.

You can use them to help you make decisions, to help you kind of understand what strengths and weaknesses you have and those kind of things, matchups potentially, but you've got to trust your eyes, got to trust your gut. You've got to kind of use them in the right way.

Q. J.J. Spaun on Sunday had some comments at Wentworth, said he was playing with a chip on his shoulder. He had conversations that led him to believe he would make the team. Wondering if you understand why he might have that perspective and what your reaction was to hearing those.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: First of all, I'm super excited for J.J. What he did at Wentworth was impressive coming down the stretch. That was some great golf he played. I'm a huge J.J. Spaun fan.

Being captain, you have to make tough decisions unfortunately. We had 15 guys, 16 guys that we were really looking at. I'm looking at one of my vice captains in the front row over here who had a really good chance of making this team. So you're going to have to make these tough decisions.

The best advice I got from all the captains I talked to and even coaches, you've got to trust your gut. My gut was telling me one thing. You've got to make those decisions. It's tough. I feel awful for J.J., and I always will, because he's a great dude and I love the guy to death.

That being said, he's a competitor. Like I knew this was going to happen. I told all the guys that didn't make the team, like your job is to go make me look like an idiot as quick as possible.

So I fully expect Ryan Gerard, I fully expect Gary to win, fully expect Akshay, all these guys that were around the cusp of making this team to go out and make me look stupid. That's why they're the best golfers in the world. Give them something to go set their sights on, they're going to do it.

I can't wait to see J.J. get off to a great start next year, and I would be shocked if he's not on the team in Ireland.

Q. Now you've been a captain for nearly an entire cycle, what are the pros and cons in your mind of having a group of players that competes in one of these events every year compared to every other?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: It's a good question. I think the pros are getting these guys around each other more often. You're forced to spend time together or forced in a practice session this week to spend 12, 16 hours a day together. So these relationships can speed up, and you can find these friendships faster.

I think the cons would be the same thing, like these guys have a pretty full schedule. So asking them to give up two weeks of their life every year is a big ask. So we've tried to be very conscious about that. These guys play a full schedule. They travel around the world. A lot of our guys on our team have young families. I'm trying to be very conscious of like that's really important to them. We want to make sure we do that.

Q. And how much time is spent thinking about the collective future of Team USA and future cups in general compared to just winning this week?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: That's definitely in the back of your mind. Obviously having past captains as -- having Keegan here, having Jim being the next captain here, those are the kind of conversations we have because we're so invested in this. Our biggest charge is we want these guys to be successful. You don't spend a year and a half of your life for our team to win the cup and then forget about it. You invest in this for the rest of your life. You want these guys to have the best experience possible.

Anything you learn along the way, you want to pass on to the next captain to say, hey, I wish I'd done this differently, or I think this worked really well. Those kinds of things are always happening. We as captains, that's what our charge is. We've got to make sure this keeps getting better for these guys so they can keep getting more comfortable and having great experiences and wanting to be on these teams and wanting to come back.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk about the relationship between Justin Thomas and Jackson Koivun and if he's emerged as a mentor for him?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah, one thing that I've gotten out of this getting to know Jackson that I didn't know before, he's got some really good relationships with the guys on this teams. He and Russell Henley play a lot of golf together, and I didn't know that until we got into this process. He's looked up to Justin for a long time, and Justin has taken him under his wing long before this

process started.

That was kind of a surprise to me. I didn't realize those relationships existed and that's super important, super exciting for us. Now when Jackson walks in a room, he's got a couple of friendly faces that he knows, and that makes the transition so much easier.

Q. You mentioned before about the support you felt from the city the first time you were here. Why has it kind of disappeared on a regular basis? It was here every year. And what would it do for the Tour to have this site or just the city back in the rotation?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I think when you talk about Chicago, you can't help but think, one, of the fan base that exists here. For a sports team, they are some of the best sports fans in the country. You also as a golfer, selfishly, you can't help but think about the amount of great golf that happened in this area. There's so many great venues around here. There's so much great golf around here.

It seems like a no-brainer that we should be here more often than we are. There's so many great corporations that are based out of here. I think that's something the new Tour staff is looking heavily at. I know Brian and his team have done a great job of trying to rethink how we do things and trying to have great places like this on the map for us.

I was fortunate enough to play here at the old Western Open at Cog Hill, and what a great venue that was, how much fun that event was. I've been around the golf scene here for a long time. I know what it's capable of. I can't wait for the fans to get here and see this first tee built out and get them loud and going.

Q. Two things quick. First, are you structuring these practice rounds in any way? Are they playing specific matches? Have you asked them to do? Or just having them prep the way they prep?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Just prep. We're staying out of their way.

Q. Secondly, going back to the previous thing, I'm just kind of adjusting to the fly or sticking to the game plan last year during the Presidents Cup but kind of after day one, that was a topic of whether to change things up because the first day didn't go that well or stick to the plan. Keegan said to stick to how you had been viewing it for months and months. Just wondering what you remember from those conversations and how that's maybe shaped or molded how you'll make things middle of the event?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: What was the first question again? I'm sorry.

Q. Just what do you remember from the team room at the Ryder Cup Thursday and Friday -- or Friday into Saturday?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Ryder Cup or Montreal?

Q. Ryder Cup.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Ryder Cup, okay, gotcha.

Q. And you adjusting on the fly.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Ryder Cup was -- I thought Keegan did a great job of keeping the guys in it. Obviously those first couple days, the Ryder Cup didn't go the way we had planned. As Mike Tyson famously says, everybody has a plan until they get hit in the mouth. So we got hit in the mouth, and I was really impressed with how Keegan kept the guys in it.

It obviously didn't go the way we wanted to, but it could have been really bad the way things were going. The guys fought. I thought our team came together on Saturday night like no other team I've ever seen. The way Keegan was able to get up there and kind of keep the guys engaged, he gave a great speech that probably will never get -- probably would have had the media written about it if -- the way it probably could have.

I took a lot from that. I learned a lot about our team from that. These guys didn't quit. They all bonded together. They came out there and played one of the best rounds of golf, I think, in golf history on Sunday. It taught me a lot about what these guys are made up of.

The second part of your question?

Q. Just learning about adjusting on the fly.

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I think we always have a plan, but you can't be just rigid with it. You have to take the data that's available to you, what's happened after the first session, what's happened after the second session, see what's going on, see how guys are feeling, and then adjust accordingly.

Hopefully your plan is unbelievable. Thursday, Friday goes just how you want to and just going to keep going. That very rarely ever happens. Talking to as many captains as I talked to, nobody's had a plan that's been perfect. They've always had to adjust a little bit here or there.



Q. During the Ryder Cup, there was a lot of talk about whether or not the course was set up advantageous enough for Team USA. Did any of that play into your mind coming into this week and how to set up the course, and did you feel any pressure to really make sure the course is set up in a way that benefits your guys?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: Yeah. As a home captain, that's one of the advantages. You get to set parameters with how the golf course should be set up. I was very clear with our Tour staff of how we wanted this place to try to get to, kind of eerily similar to what happened at Bethpage, has not gone according to plan. So you can have a great plan in front of you, but mother nature throws a wrench in it, and there's other factors you have to deal with.

I've talked to the guys a ton about this. It's like I don't care where we play. You guys shouldn't care where we play. We're going to play another team. Be competitors. Go out there and be competitors. And they are. These guys are the best competitors in the world.

You try to do everything you can to stack the odds in your favor, but at the end of the day, the guys have got to go out there and do it.

Q. Phones have changed a lot in the last 15 years, but I want to know was there a group chat in 2012 at Medinah?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I don't remember. Was there a group chat in '12? I don't think there was.

I tell the story about how nervous I was and going to the 1st tee on Friday morning when I was playing with Jim and we were first off and seeing the first tee at 5:30 lit up with cell phone lights. They had opened their flip phones and turned them on so they could see, and it was terrifying to me as a player. That was my first experience.

Yeah, didn't have any group chats like that back then. We did have team dinners and bonding stuff, but not like the group chats we have now.

Q. That's what I was kind of alluding to. What is the nature of the group chat? I know some teams, particularly the European team, they like used it to bond. They've kept it going years after years. Could you tell us the name of the team group chat, what's the vibe in there?

BRANDT SNEDEKER: I was in charge of the name. It's called Medinah '26. Really inventive, yeah. (Laughter.)

The guys have been great. I think it's a great way to get these young guys involved in the team. I've been super impressed with how funny Jacob Bridgeman and Chris Gotterup and Jackson are in these things. It's been hilarious to me to see them interact with the guys on the team. It's gotten to the point where Scottie's even had to chime in, which Scottie is not a big texter. For him to chime in, you know it's gotten pretty good.

It's been fun for those guys to feel like they're part of the team.

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